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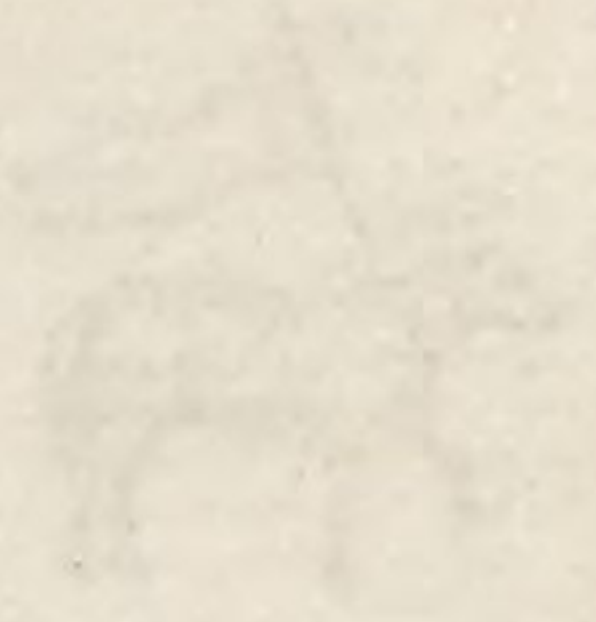
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THE TEMPLE DRAMATISTS

Shelley's PROMETHEUS UNBOUND





THE TEMPLE OF KNOWLEDGE

AND THE PROMISES OF THE FUTURE





Percy Bysshe Shelley

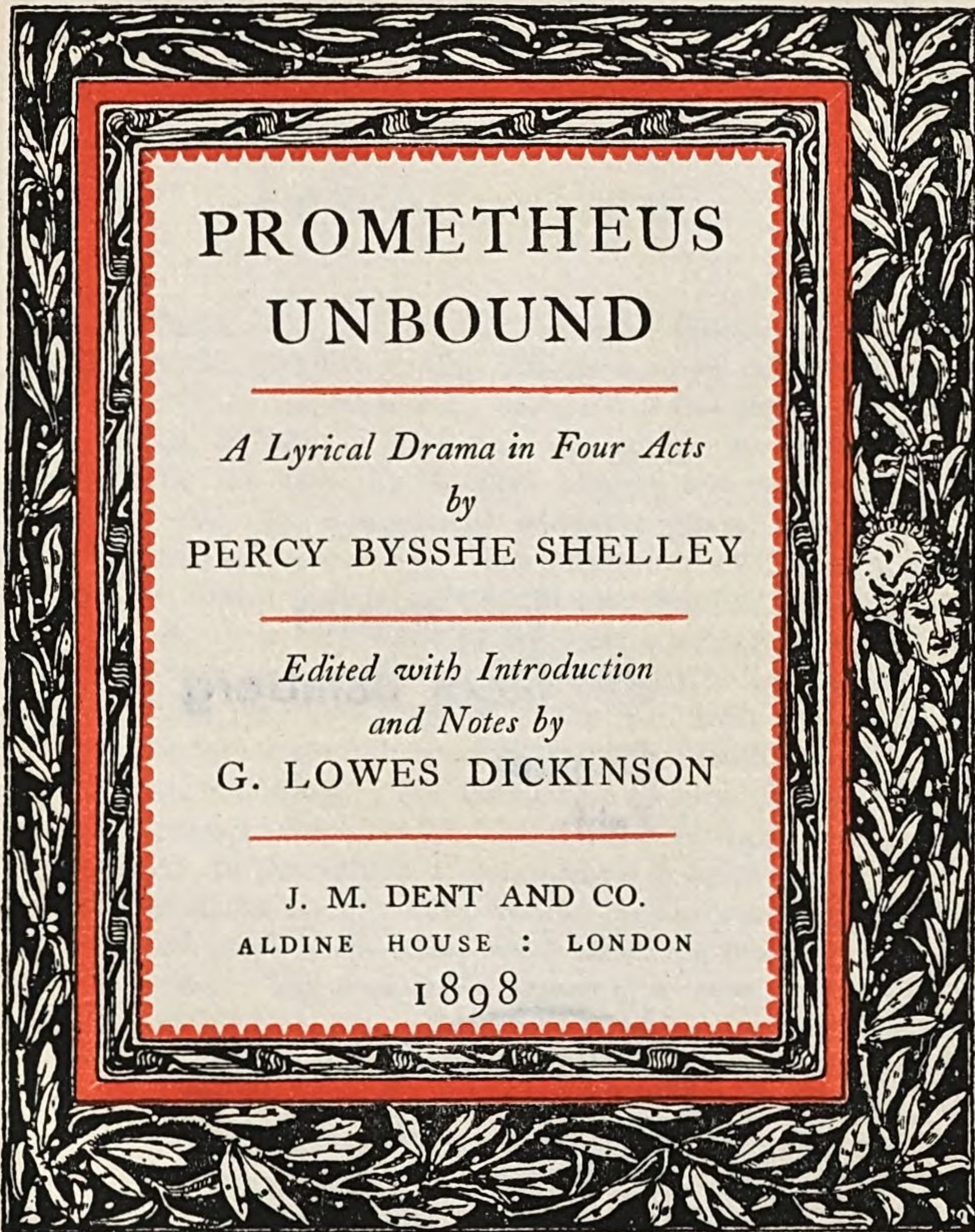
ROMETHUS
UNBOUND

A NEW SYSTEM OF
TEACHING THE
ART OF WRITING

BY
J. ROMETHUS
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

LONDON: J. JOHNSON AND CO.
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1798





PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

A Lyrical Drama in Four Acts
by
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

*Edited with Introduction
and Notes by*
G. LOWES DICKINSON

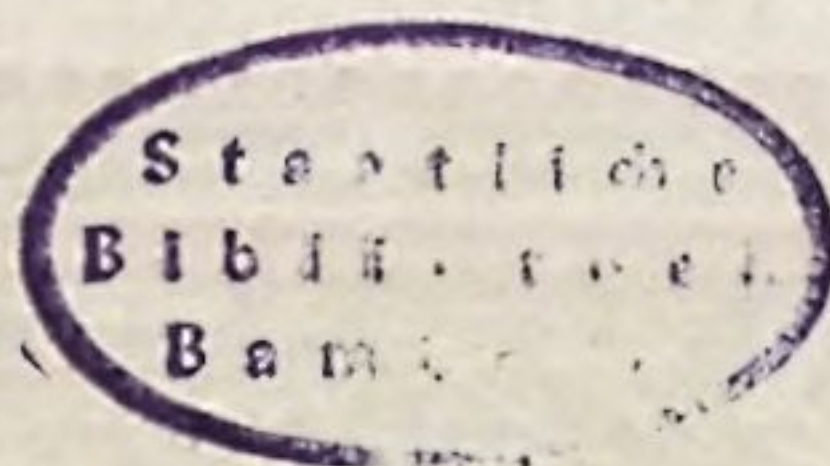
J. M. DENT AND CO.
ALDINE HOUSE : LONDON

1898

**Eigentum
der Stadt Bamberg**

Gruppe:

Zahl:



Introduction.

The Text. The text of the *Prometheus Unbound*, as of all Shelley's works, presents peculiar difficulties to an editor. The sources are (1) an imperfect MS., preserved at Boscombe, (2) the first edition, of 1820. This does not appear to have been corrected for the press by the poet himself, and we have his own authority that it contained numerous errata. (3) Mrs Shelley's first edition of 1839. The importance of this edition is that it embodied Shelley's own list of corrections to the edition of 1820. But it is impossible to say what unauthorised alterations may have been introduced by Mrs Shelley herself, or what new misprints may have crept in. The net result is that an editor is left very much to his own judgment in choosing between various possible readings. The variants are all given fully in Mr Buxton Forman's edition, which is thus invaluable to all students of the text. In this edition, I have thought it sufficient to give, in the notes, those variants only, whether in the punctuation or in the actual words of the text, which affect the sense in some important way. The final choice among them must always, in some instances, be a matter of uncertainty. My own judgment, as was to be expected, has not agreed throughout with that of any former editor; but the reader will find, as I have indicated, the materials for reviewing it given in the notes. Reference may be made here to an article by Miss Blind in the *Westminster Review*, July 1870, giving some readings from the MS.; and to

Mr Swinburne's 'Notes on the Text of Shelley' in his *Essays and Studies*.

The Composition of the Drama. The *Prometheus Unbound* was published in 1820, Shelley being then twenty-eight years old. Included in the same volume were the following poems:—The Sensitive Plant, A Vision of the Sea, Ode to Heaven, An Exhortation, Ode to the West Wind, An Ode, written October 1819, before the Spaniards had recovered their Liberty, The Cloud, To a Skylark, Ode to Liberty. The *Prometheus* was originally designed in three acts, which were composed at Rome, under circumstances described by Shelley himself in his 'Preface' printed below. The fourth act was added later, at Florence. Shelley regarded the work at the time as "the most perfect of my productions," "the best thing I ever wrote;" and certainly it is the completest expression we have of his philosophy of life, and contains some of his finest poetry.

The Myth of Prometheus. The Greek myth which suggested the subject of Shelley's drama is treated as follows in the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus.—In the battle between the Gods and the Titans, Prometheus sided with the former, and by his counsels secured them the victory. Zeus (Jupiter) being thus established in power, determined to destroy mankind, and create in their stead a new race. Prometheus intervened to save them, mercifully closed their eyes to the future, gave them hope for their comfort, and instructed them in the arts of life. To punish him for this, Zeus chained him to a rock in Scythia. But Prometheus had still a hold on his enemy; he knew the secret on which his fate depended. Should Zeus make a certain marriage, he would be overthrown by the child born of it; but what

the marriage was, no one knew but Prometheus. As he was boasting of this knowledge, Zeus sent down his messenger Hermes to demand the disclosure of the secret; Prometheus refused, and Zeus, in retaliation, hurled him down to Tartarus. At this point the *Prometheus Bound* ends; but Aeschylus wrote also a *Prometheus Unbound*, of which however only a few fragments are preserved, and these insufficient to indicate in detail how he treated the theme. In the *Prometheus Bound*, we are told that after a long lapse of time, Prometheus was to be restored to the upper air, there to be preyed upon by an eagle, as represented in Shelley's drama (l., 34). Of his deliverance two versions are suggested, which appear to be mutually inconsistent. According to the one, his punishment was to endure until some god should volunteer to take his place in Hades, a prophecy which is said to have been fulfilled by Cheiron. According to the other, which was the one adopted by Aeschylus in his *Prometheus Unbound*, and after him by Shelley, the deliverance was to be effected by Hercules, who was to kill the eagle and unbind the captive. In the drama of Aeschylus, it appears that the deliverance was preceded by a reconciliation of Prometheus with Zeus. Prometheus, it seems, purchased his release by informing Zeus that the marriage which would prove fatal to his power would be a marriage with Thetis. What Shelley thought of this solution is indicated in his 'Preface':—"I was averse," he says, "from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary." In his drama, accordingly, the secret is unrevealed;

the marriage with Thetis is consummated, and Zeus is overthrown.

From this brief sketch it will be seen that the plot of Shelley's drama is based upon a modification of the ancient legend; but the story, as he treats it, has lost all solidity and verisimilitude. To Aeschylus the myth was the true structure of his tragedy, an architecture which he adorned but never obscured by symbolic decorations; in Shelley's hands it becomes a mere framework for the luxuriant growth of his metaphysical imagination. Zeus and Prometheus, as he conceives them, are unembodied Spirits, the one of Evil and the other of Good; the Power that overthrows the tyrant is a formless symbol of Eternity; even Hercules is something less than a shadow. The whole legend, in short, is so transfigured and refined in the crucible of the poet's genius that the fragments of the ancient story yet remaining unfused show like uncouth blocks of solid marble hung in a radiant palace of air and fire. It is the meaning of the myth, not the myth itself, that is important in Shelley's drama; and the structure of his plot is as wavering and weak as the colour and atmosphere with which it is clothed are dazzling and superb.

The Personages of the Drama. Of the personages of the drama little need be said. Most of them are familiar figures of classical mythology. Asia is represented by the Ancients sometimes as the mother, sometimes (as here) as the wife of Prometheus; she is also identified with Venus, and thus with the productive spirit of nature; and it is so that Shelley conceives her in this drama. The Earth is introduced by the poet under two distinct impersonations; the one is the ancient goddess of the Greeks; the other (first presented in Act III., sc. iv.) is

one of Shelley's own characteristic creations, "the delicate spirit that guides the earth through heaven"; and it is this spirit that appears in the fourth act.

Demogorgon is a more obscure conception. W. G. Hort in his *New Pantheon*¹ has the following account of him:—

"This allegorical Divinity was the genius of the earth. Such fear and veneration did his name inspire, that no one durst pronounce it aloud. Philosophers regarded this Deity as the spirit of heat, the life and support of plants, but he was revered, by the people at large, as a real being. His figure was that of a dirty old man, pale and disfigured, covered with moss, and residing in the bowels of the earth.

"Weary and disgusted with his dismal abode, Demogorgon formed a ball, seated himself upon it, and rising into the air, fixed the limits of the earth, and created the heavens. Passing over the Acroceraunian mountains which emitted fire, he took from them some flaming matter, with which he made the sun; he then placed it in the heavens to illumine the earth. From him proceeded Tartarus and Nox."

This account appears to be based on the 'Genealogia deorum' of Boccacio,² and is not found in any extant classical author. The earliest mention of the name Demogorgon occurs in a commentator on the Latin poet Statius. The poet speaks of "the supreme

¹ Ed. 1854, p. 83.

² See especially book i., chapters i., vi., and vii. Boccacio refers to an authority, Theodontius, who in his turn professes to have his account from Pronapides, said to be the teacher of Homer. No such authors are extant. And Boccacio does not profess himself to have read Theodontius, but to have borrowed his statements from a book by Paulus Perusinus, librarian to Robert, King of Jerusalem and Sicily, which book is not extant. See Boccacio *ib.*, book xv., chapter vi.

Power of the triple world whom it is impious to know " ; and his commentator explains, "he refers to the supreme god, Demogorgon, whose name may not be known."¹ This god he describes as the father of the sun and the moon ; referring to Orpheus, Pythagoras and Plato. Demogorgon is accordingly supposed by some to be a corruption of Demiurgus, the creator of the world, of whom these philosophers spoke. The name occurs not seldom in modern literature ; in Spencer, for example :—

" Downe in the bottom of the deepe Abygge,
Where Demogorgon in dull darknesse pent
Farre from the view of gods and heavenes bliss
The hideous Chaos keepes." ²

and in Milton :—

" Orcus and Aides and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon." ³

In Shelley's representation, Demogorgon is the ultimate Power, behind and above all things that are, even the gods themselves. It is he that is the agent of Jupiter's fall, of which the marriage with Thetis (Act III., sc. i.), is merely the occasion. This marriage, in fact, in Shelley's drama, is a rather otiose survival of the ancient myth, according to which the overthrow of Jupiter was to be brought about by the offspring of the union in question.

The Philosophy of the Drama. Of the philosophy of the drama it is hardly necessary to speak here, still less to offer any criticism. But it may be worth while to cite the following passage from Mrs Shelley's notes on the *Prometheus* as a succinct

¹ Lactantius on Statius, *Theb.*, II., 516.

² *Faery Queene*, IV., 2, 47 ; cf. I., 5, 22 ; I., 37.

³ *Paradise Lost*, II., 964.

exposition of the poet's views:—"The prominent feature of Shelley's theory of the destiny of the human species was, that evil is not inherent in the system of the creation, but an accident that might be expelled. This also forms a portion of Christianity; God made earth and man perfect, till he, by his fall,

‘Brought death into the world, and all our woe.’

Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there shall be no evil, and there would be none. It is not my part in these notes to notice the arguments that have been urged against this opinion, but to mention the fact that he entertained it, and was indeed attached to it with fervent enthusiasm. That man could be so perfectionised as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of the creation, was the cardinal point of his system. And the subject he loved best to dwell on was the image of One warring with the Evil Principle, oppressed not only by it, but by all, even the good, who were deluded into considering evil a necessary portion of humanity; a victim, full of fortitude and hope, and the spirit of triumph emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of good." Such a victim is Prometheus, who, as we are further informed by Mrs Shelley, typifies Humanity suffering under "the tortures generated by evil done or suffered." On his liberation Nature (personified as Asia) "resumes the beauty of her prime, and is united to her husband, the emblem of the human race, in perfect and happy union."

The tracing, in detail, of this ideal significance of the drama, I must leave to the reader's own ingenuity and taste. But it may be useful to refer to a study by Mr W. Rossetti entitled "*Shelley's Prometheus Unbound: A study of its meaning and personages.*" (London, printed for private circulation, 1886.)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PROMETHEUS.

DEMOGORGON.

JUPITER.

THE EARTH.

OCEAN.

APOLLO.

MERCURY.

HERCULES.

ASIA.

PANTHEA. } *Oceanides.*

IONE.

THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON.

SPIRITS OF THE HOURS.

SPIRITS.

ECHOES.

FAUNS.

FURIES.

Preface.

THE Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar licence. The *Prometheus Unbound* of Aeschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules.

Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Aeschylus; an ambition, which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgment, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandizement, which, in the Hero of *Paradise Lost*, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who con-

sider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives, to the best and noblest ends.

This poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakespeare are full of instances of the same kind: Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power; and it is the study of their works (since a higher merit would probably be denied

me), to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candour to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition, for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems, far more popular, and indeed more deservedly popular, than mine. It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects. It is true, that, not the spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself, are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged, they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England, has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains

at every period materially the same ; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets equal to those who (if we except Shakespeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and development of the same spirit : the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates ; but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole

produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe, as exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural, and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Aeschylus and

Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakespeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, “a passion for reforming the world;” what passion incited him to write and publish his book, he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the

unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematic history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of injustice and superstition flatter themselves that I should take Aeschylus rather than Plato as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with the candid; and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation. Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them: if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts; the pile they raise will betray his grave which might otherwise have been unknown.



PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

A LYRICAL DRAMA

PROBATIONER

AMERICAN

Prometheus Unbound.

A Lyrical Drama.

Act First.

Scene.—A Ravine of Icy Rocks in the Indian Caucasus.

Prometheus is discovered bound to the Precipice. Panthea and Ione are seated at his feet. Time, Night. During the scene, Morning slowly breaks.

Pro. Monarch of Gods and Dæmons, and all Spirits
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,

With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn, 10
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire.
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty God!
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain, 20
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever! 30

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears

Of their moon-freezing crystals ; the bright chains
 Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
 Heaven's wingèd hound, polluting from thy lips
 His beak in poison not his own, tears up
 My heart ; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
 The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
 Mocking me : and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
 To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
 When the rocks split and close again behind : 40
 While from their loud abysses howling throng
 The genii of the storm, urging the rage
 Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.
 And yet to me welcome is day and night,
 Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
 Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
 The leaden-coloured east ; for then they lead
 The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom—
 As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—
 Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood 50
 From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
 If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
 Disdain ! Ah no ! I pity thee. What ruin
 Will hunt thee undefended through the wide Heaven !
 How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
 Gape like a hell within ! I speak in grief,

Not exultation, for I hate no more,
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Moun-
tains,

Whose many-voicèd Echoes, through the mist 60
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
Shuddering through India! Thou serenest Air,
Through which the sun walks burning without
beams!

And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poisèd wings
Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,
As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
The orbèd world! If then my words had power,
Though I am changed so that aught evil wish 70
Is dead within; although no memory be
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!
What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak.

FIRST VOICE: *from the Mountains.*

Thrice three hundred thousand years
O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood:
Oft, as men convulsed with fears,
We trembled in our multitude.

SECOND VOICE : *from the Springs.*

Thunderbolts had parched our water,
We had been stained with bitter blood,
And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter, 80
Through a city and a solitude.

THIRD VOICE : *from the Air.*

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,
Its wastes in colours not their own,
And oft had my serene repose
Been cloven by many a rending groan.

FOURTH VOICE : *from the Whirlwinds.*

We had soared beneath these mountains
Unresting ages ; nor had thunder,
Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,
Nor any power above or under
Ever made us mute with wonder. 90

FIRST VOICE.

But never bowed our snowy crest
As at the voice of thine unrest.

SECOND VOICE.

Never such a sound before
To the Indian waves we bore.

A pilot asleep on the howling sea
 Leaped up from the deck in agony,
 And heard, and cried, "Ah, woe is me!"
 And died as mad as the wild waves be.

THIRD VOICE.

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven
 My still realm was never riven : 100
 When its wound was closed, there stood
 Darkness o'er the day like blood.

FOURTH VOICE.

And we shrank back : for dreams of ruin
 To frozen caves our flights pursuing
 Made us keep silence—thus—and thus—
 Though silence is a hell to us.

The Earth. The tongueless Caverns of the craggy hills
 Cried, "Misery!" then; the hollow Heaven replied,
 "Misery!" And the Ocean's purple waves,
 Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds, 110
 And the pale nations heard it, "Misery!"

Pro. I hear a sound of voices : not the voice
 Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou
 Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will

Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove,
 Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist
 Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,
 The Titan? He who made his agony
 The barrier to your else all-conquering foe?
 Oh, rock-embosomed lawns, and snow-fed streams,
 Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below, 121
 Through whose o'ershadowing woods I wandered
 once

With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes;
 Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now
 To commune with me? me alone, who checked,
 As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,
 The falsehood and the force of him who reigns
 Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves
 Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses:
 Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!

The Earth.

They dare not. 130

Pro. Who dares? for I would hear that curse again.

Ha, what an awful whisper rises up!

'Tis scarce like sound: it tingles through the frame

As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.

Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice

I only know that thou art moving near

And love. How cursed I him?

The Earth.

How canst thou hear

Who knowest not the language of the dead ?

Pro. Thou art a living spirit : speak as they.

The Earth. I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell
King 140

Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain
More torturing than the one whereon I roll.

Subtle thou art and good ; and though the Gods
Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God
Being wise and kind : earnestly hearken now.

Pro. Obscurely through my brain, like shadows dim,
Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel
Faint, like one mingled in entwining love ;
Yet 'tis not pleasure.

The Earth. No, thou canst not hear :
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known 150
Only to those who die.

Pro. And what art thou,
O melancholy Voice ?

The Earth. I am the Earth,
Thy mother ; she within whose stony veins,
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree
Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air,
Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud

Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy !
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted
Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust, 160
And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread
Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.
Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll
Around us : their inhabitants beheld
My spherèd light wane in wide Heaven ; the sea
Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire
From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow
Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown ;
Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains ;
Blue thistles bloomed in cities ; foodless toads 170
Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled :
When Plague had fallen on man, and beast, and
worm,
And Famine ; and black blight on herb and tree ;
And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,
Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds
Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry
With grief ; and the thin air, my breath, was stained
With the contagion of a mother's hate
Breathed on her child's destroyer ; ay, I heard
Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not,
Yet my innumerable seas and streams, 181

Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,
And the inarticulate people of the dead,
Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate
In secret joy and hope those dreadful words
But dare not speak them.

Pro. Venerable mother !

All else who live and suffer take from thee
Some comfort ; flowers, and fruits, and happy
sounds,

And love, though fleeting ; these may not be mine.
But mine own words, I pray, deny me not. 190

The Earth. They shall be told. Ere Babylon was
dust,

The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.

That apparition, sole of men, he saw.

For know there are two worlds of life and death :

One that which thou beholdest ; but the other

Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit

The shadows of all forms that think and live

Till death unite them and they part no more ;

Dreams and the light imaginings of men, 200

And all that faith creates or love desires,

Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.

There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,

'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains ; all the gods
 Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds,
 Vast, sceptred phantoms ; heroes, men, and beasts ;
 And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom ;
 And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
 Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter
 The curse which all remember. Call at will 210
 Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
 Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods
 From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin,
 Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.
 Ask, and they must reply : so the revenge
 Of the Supreme may sweep through vacant shades,
 As rainy wind through the abandoned gate
 Of a fallen palace.

Pro. Mother, let not aught
 Of that which may be evil, pass again
 My lips, or those of aught resembling me. 220
 Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear !

IONE.

My wings are folded o'er mine ears :
 My wings are crossèd o'er mine eyes :
 Yet through their silver shade appears,
 And through their lulling plumes arise,

A Shape, a throng of sounds ;
 May it be no ill to thee
 O thou of many wounds !
 Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
 Ever thus we watch and wake. 230

PANTHEA.

The sound is of whirlwind underground,
 Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven ;
 The shape is awful like the sound,
 Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.
 A sceptre of pale gold
 To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud
 His veined hand doth hold.
 Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
 Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

Phantasm of Jupiter. Why have the secret powers of this
 strange world 240

Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither
 On direst storms ? What unaccustomed sounds
 Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice
 With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk
 In darkness ? And, proud sufferer, who art thou ?

Pro. Tremendous Image, as thou art must be

He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,
The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,
Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

The Earth. Listen! And though your echoes must be
mute, 250

Grey mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

Phan. A spirit seizes me and speaks within :

It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.

Pan. See, how he lifts his mighty looks! the Heaven
Darkens above.

Ione. He speaks! O shelter me!

Pro. I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles, 260
Written as on a scroll: yet speak! Oh, speak!

PHANTASM.

Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind,
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,
One only being shalt thou not subdue.
Rain then thy plagues upon me here,
Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;

And let alternate frost and fire
Eat into me, and be thine ire
Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms 270
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Ay, do thy worst ! Thou art omnipotent.
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent
To blast mankind, from yon aetherial tower.
Let thy malignant spirit move
In darkness over those I love :
On me and mine I imprecate
The utmost torture of thy hate ;
And thus devote to sleepless agony 280
This undeclining head, while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord : O, thou
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,
To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow
In fear and worship : all-prevailing foe !
I curse thee ! let a sufferer's curse
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse ;
Till thine Infinity shall be
A robe of envenomed agony ;
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain, 290
To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this curse,
 Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good ;
 Both infinite as is the universe,
 And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.
 An awful image of calm power
 Though now thou sittest, let the hour
 Come, when thou must appear to be
 That which thou art internally ;
 And after many a false and fruitless crime 300
 Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless space
 and time.

Pro. Were these my words, O Parent ?

The Earth. They were thine.

Pro. It doth repent me : words are quick and vain ;
 Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.
 I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

THE EARTH.

Misery, Oh, misery to me,
 That Jove at length should vanquish thee.
 Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,
 The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.
 Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead ! 310
 Your refuge, your defence lies fallen and van-
 quishèd !

FIRST ECHO.

Lies fallen and vanquishèd !

SECOND ECHO.

Fallen and vanquishèd !

IONE.

Fear not : 'tis but some passing spasm ;

The Titan is unvanquished still.

But see, where through the azure chasm

Of yon forked and snowy hill

Trampling the slant winds on high

With golden-sandalled feet, that glow

Under plumes of purple dye,

320

Like rose-ensanguined ivory,

A Shape comes now,

Stretching on high from his right hand

A serpent-cinctured wand.

Pan. 'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury.

IONE.

And who are those with hydra tresses

And iron wings that climb the wind,

Whom the frowning God represses

Like vapours steaming up behind,

Clanging loud, an endless crowd ?

330

PANTHEA.

These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
When charioted on sulphurous cloud
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

IONE.

Are they now led, from the thin dead
On new pangs to be fed?

Pan. The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

First Fury. Ha! I scent life!

Second Fury. Let me but look into his eyes!

Third Fury. The hope of torturing him smells like a heap
Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle. 340

First Fury. Darest thou delay, O Herald? take cheer,
Hounds

Of Hell! what if the Son of Maia soon
Should make us food and sport—who can please
long
The Omnipotent?

Mer. Back to your towers of iron,
And gnash, beside the streams of fire and wail,¹
Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise! and Gorgon,

Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends
 Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine,
 Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate :
 These shall perform your task.

First Fury.

Oh, mercy ! mercy !

We die with our desire : drive us not back ! 351

Mer. Crouch then in silence.

Awful Sufferer !

To thee unwilling, most unwillingly
 I come, by the great Father's will driven down,
 To execute a doom of new revenge.
 Alas ! I pity thee, and hate myself
 That I can do no more : aye from thy sight
 Returning, for a season, Heaven seems Hell,
 So thy worn form pursues me night and day,
 Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good,
 But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife 361
 Against the Omnipotent ; as yon clear lamps
 That measure and divide the weary years
 From which there is no refuge, long have taught
 And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer
 arms

With the strange might of unimagined pains
 The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,
 And my commission is to lead them here,

Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends
 People the abyss, and leave them to their task. 370
 Be it not so ! there is a secret known
 To thee, and to none else of living things,
 Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,
 The fear of which perplexes the Supreme.
 Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne
 In intercession ; bend thy soul in prayer,
 And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,
 Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart :
 For benefits and meek submission tame
 The fiercest and the mightiest.

<i>Pro.</i>	Evil minds	380
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Change good to their own nature. I gave all
 He has ; and in return he chains me here
 Years, ages, night and day : whether the Sun
 Split my parched skin, or in the moony night
 The crystal-wingèd snow cling round my hair :
 Whilst my belovèd race is trampled down
 By his thought-executing ministers.
 Such is the tyrant's recompense : 'tis just :
 He who is evil can receive no good ;
 And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost, 390
 He can feel hate, fear, shame ; not gratitude :
 He but requites me for his own misdeed.

Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks
With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.
Submission, thou dost know I cannot try :
For what submission but that fatal word,
The death-seal of mankind's captivity,
Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,
Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,
Or could I yield? Which yet I will not yield. 400
Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned
In brief Omnipotence : secure are they :
For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down
Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,
Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,
Enduring thus, the retributive hour
Which since we spake is even nearer now.
But hark, the hell-hounds clamour : fear delay :
Behold ! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.

Mer. Oh, that we might be spared, I to inflict 410

And thou to suffer ! Once more answer me :
Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power ?

Pro. I know but this, that it must come.

Mer. Alas !

Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain ?

Pro. They last while Jove must reign : nor more, nor less
Do I desire or fear.

Mer. Yet pause, and plunge
Into Eternity, where recorded time,
Even all that we imagine, age on age,
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind
Flags wearily in its unending flight, 420
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless ;
Perchance it has not numbered the slow years
Which thou must spend in torture, unreprieved ?

Pro. Perchance no thought can count them : yet they
pass.

Mer. If thou might'st dwell among the Gods the while
Lapped in voluptuous joy ?

Pro. I would not quit
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

Mer. Alas ! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

Pro. Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene, 430
As light in the sun, throned. How vain is talk !
Call up the fiends.

Ione. O, sister, look ! White fire
Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded
cedar ;

How fearfully God's thunder howls behind !

Mer. I must obey his words and thine : alas !
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart !

Pan. See where the child of Heaven, with wingèd feet,
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

Ione. Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes
Lest thou behold and die ! they come, they come 440
Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,
And hollow underneath, like death.

First Fury. Prometheus !

Second Fury. Immortal Titan !

Third Fury. Champion of Heaven's slaves !

Pro. He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here,
Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,
What and who are ye ? Never yet there came
Phantasms so foul through monster-teeming Hell
From the all-miscreative brain of Jove.

Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,
Methinks I grow like what I contemplate, 450
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

First Fury. We are the ministers of pain, and fear,
And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,
And clinging crime ; and as lean dogs pursue
Through wood and lake some struck and sobbing
fawn,

We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,
When the great King betrays them to our will.

Pro. O many fearful natures in one name,

I know ye ; and these lakes and echoes know
The darkness and the clangour of your wings. 460
But why more hideous than your loathèd selves
Gather ye up in legions from the deep ?

Second Fury. We knew not that : Sisters, rejoice,
rejoice !

Pro. Can aught exult in its deformity ?

Second Fury. The beauty of delight makes lovers glad,
Gazing on one another : so are we.

As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
To gather for her festal crown of flowers
The aërial crimson falls, flushing her cheek,
So from our victim's destined agony 470
The shade which is our form invests us round ;
Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

Pro. I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

First Fury. Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from
bone,

And nerve from nerve, working like fire within ?

Pro. Pain is my element, as hate is thine ;
Ye rend me now : I care not.

Second Fury. Dost imagine
We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes ?

Pro. I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer, 480

Being evil. Cruel was the power which called
You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

Third Fury. Thou think'st we will live through thee, one
by one,

Like animal life, and though we can obscure not
The soul which burns within, that we will dwell
Beside it, like a vain loud multitude
Vexing the self-content of wisest men :

That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,
And foul desire round thine astonished heart,
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins
Crawling like agony ?

490

Pro. Why, ye are thus now ;
Yet am I king over myself, and rule
The torturing and conflicting throngs within,
As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

CHORUS OF FURIES.

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the
earth,
Where the night has its grave and the morning its
birth,

Come, come, come !

O ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,
When cities sink howling in ruin ; and ye

Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea, 500
And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track,
Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck ;

Come, come, come !

Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,
Strewed beneath a nation dead ;

Leave the hatred, as in ashes

Fire is left for future burning :
It will burst in bloodier flashes

When ye stir it, soon returning : 510

Leave the self-contempt implanted

In young spirits, sense-enchanted,

Misery's yet unkindled fuel :

Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted

To the maniac dreamer ; cruel

More than ye can be with hate

Is he with fear.

Come, come, come !

We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate

And we burthen the blasts of the atmosphere,

But vainly we toil till ye come here. 520

Ione. Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

Pan. These solid mountains quiver with the sound

Even as the tremulous air : their shadows make

The space within my plumes more black than night.

FIRST FURY.

Your call was as a wingèd car
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far
It rapt us from red gulfs of war.

SECOND FURY.

From wide cities, famine-wasted ;

THIRD FURY.

Groans half heard, and blood untasted ;

FOURTH FURY.

Kingly conclaves stern and cold,
Where blood with gold is bought and sold ;

530

FIFTH FURY.

From the furnace, white and hot,
In which—

A FURY.

Speak not ! whisper not !
I know all that ye would tell,
But to speak might break the spell
Which must bend the Invincible,
The stern of thought ;
He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

FURY.

Tear the veil !

ANOTHER FURY.

It is torn.

CHORUS.

The pale stars of the morn
Shine on a misery, dire to be borne. 540
Dost thou faint, mighty Titan ? We laugh thee to
scorn.

Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst
for man ?

Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran
Those perishing waters ; a thirst of fierce fever,
Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for
ever.

One came forth of gentle worth
Smiling on the sanguine earth ;
His words outlived him, like swift poison
Withering up truth, peace, and pity.

Look ! where round the wide horizon 550

Many a million-peopled city
Vomits smoke in the bright air.
Mark that outcry of despair !

'Tis his mild and gentle ghost
 Wailing for the faith he kindled.
 Look again, the flames almost
 To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled :
 The survivors round the embers
 Gather in dread.

Joy, joy, joy !

560

Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers,
 And the future is dark, and the present is spread
 Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

SEMICHORUS I.

Drops of bloody agony flow
 From his white and quivering brow ;
 Grant a little respite now.
 See a disenchanted nation
 Springs like day from desolation ;
 To Truth its state is dedicate,
 And Freedom leads it forth, her mate ;
 A legioned band of linkèd brothers
 Whom Love calls children—

570

SEMICHORUS II.

'Tis another's !

See how kindred murder kin :
 'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin :

Blood, like new wine, bubbles within :

Till Despair smothers

The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.

[*All the FURIES vanish, except one.*]

Ione. Hark, sister ! what a low yet dreadful groan
Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart
Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep, 580
And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.

Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him ?

Pan. Alas ! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

Ione. What didst thou see ?

Pan. A woeful sight ! A youth
With patient looks nailed to a crucifix.

Ione. What next ?

Pan. The heaven around, the earth below
Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
All horrible, and wrought by human hands ;
And some appeared the work of human hearts,
For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles :
And other sights too foul to speak and live 591
Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear
By looking forth : those groans are grief enough.

Fury. Behold an emblem : those who do endure
Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap
Thousandfold torment on themselves and him.

Pro. Remit the anguish of that lighted stare ;
Close those wan lips ; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood ; it mingles with thy tears !
Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death, 600
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,
So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.
O horrible ! Thy name I will not speak ;
It hath become a curse. I see, I see
The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,
Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,
An early-chosen, late-lamented home,
As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind ;
Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells ; 610
Some—hear I not the multitude laugh loud ?—
Impaled in lingering fire ; and mighty realms
Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,
Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood
By the red light of their own burning homes.

Fury. Blood thou canst see, and fire, and canst hear
groans ;

Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.

Pro. Worse ?

Fury. In each human heart terror survives
The ruin it has gorged : the loftiest fear

All that they would disdain to think were true :
 Hypocrisy and custom make their minds 621
 The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.
 They dare not devise good for man's estate,
 And yet they know not that they do not dare.
 The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
 The powerful goodness want : worse need for them.
 The wise want love ; and those who love want
 wisdom ;

And all best things are thus confused to ill.
 Many are strong and rich, and would be just,
 But live among their suffering fellow-men 630
 As if none felt : they know not what they do.

Pro. Thy words are like a cloud of wingèd snakes ;
 And yet I pity those they torture not.

Fury. Thou pitiest them ? I speak no more !

[*Vanishes.*

Pro. Ah woe !

Ah woe ! Alas ! pain, pain ever, for ever !
 I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear
 Thy works within my woe-illumèd mind,
 Thou subtle tyrant ! Peace is in the grave.
 The grave hides all things beautiful and good :
 I am a God and cannot find it there, 640
 Nor would I seek it : for, though dread revenge,

This is defeat, fierce king ! not victory.

The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul

With new endurance, till the hour arrives

When they shall be no types of things which are.

Pan. Alas ! what sawest thou ?

Pro. There are two woes ;

To speak, and to behold ; thou spare me one.

Names are there, Nature's sacred watchwords, they

Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry ;

The nations thronged around, and cried aloud, 650

As with one voice, Truth, Liberty, and Love !

Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven

Among them : there was strife, deceit, and fear :

Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.

This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

The Earth. I felt thy torture, son, with such mixed
joy

As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state

I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,

Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,

And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind, 660

Its world-surrounding aether : they behold

Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,

The future ; may they speak comfort to thee !

Pan. Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,

Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,
Thronging in the blue air!

Ione. And see! more come,
Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,
That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.
And, hark! is it the music of the pines?
Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall? 670
Pan. 'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

From unremembered ages we
Gentle guides and guardians be
Of heaven-oppressed mortality;
And we breathe, and sicken not,
The atmosphere of human thought:
Be it dim, and dank, and grey,
Like a storm-extinguished day,
Travelled o'er by dying gleams;
Be it bright as all between 680
Cloudless skies and windless streams,
Silent, liquid, and serene;
As the birds within the wind,
As the fish within the wave,
As the thoughts of man's own mind
Float through all above the grave;

We make there our liquid lair,
Voyaging cloudlike and unpent
Through the boundless element :
Thence we bear the prophecy 690
Which begins and ends in thee !

Ione. More yet come, one by one : the air around
them
Looks radiant as the air around a star.

FIRST SPIRIT.

On a battle-trumpet's blast
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
'Mid the darkness upward cast.
From the dust of creeds outworn,
From the tyrant's banner torn,
Gathering round me, onward borne,
There was mingled many a cry— 700
Freedom ! Hope ! Death ! Victory !
Till they faded through the sky ;
And one sound, above, around,
One sound beneath, around, above,
Was moving ; 'twas the soul of love ;
'Twas the hope, the prophecy,
Which begins and ends in thee.

SECOND SPIRIT.

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,
Which rocked beneath, immovably ;
And the triumphant storm did flee, 710
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
Between, with many a captive cloud,
A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,
Each by lightning riven in half :
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh :
Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
And spread beneath a hell of death
O'er the white waters. I alit
On a great ship lightning-split,
And speeded hither on the sigh 720
Of one who gave an enemy
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

THIRD SPIRIT.

I sat beside a sage's bed,
And the lamp was burning red
Near the book where he had fed,
When a Dream with plumes of flame,
To his pillow hovering came,
And I knew it was the same

Which had kindled long ago
Pity, eloquence, and woe ; 730
And the world awhile below
Wore the shade, its lustre made.
It has borne me here as fleet
As Desire's lightning feet :
I must ride it back ere morrow,
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

FOURTH SPIRIT.

On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept ;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses, 740
But feeds on the ærial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illumine
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be ;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality !
One of these awakened me, 750
And I sped to succour thee.

Ione. Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and west
Come, as two doves to one belovèd nest,
Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air,
On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere?
And, hark! their sweet, sad voices! 'tis despair
Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

Pan. Canst thou speak, sister? All my words are
drowned.

Ione. Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float
On their sustaining wings of skiey grain, 760
Orange and azure deepening into gold:
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

FIFTH SPIRIT.

As over wide dominions
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide
air's wildernesses,
That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-
braided pinions,
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial
tresses:
His footsteps paved the world with light; but as I
passed 'twas fading,

And hollow Ruin yawned behind: great sages
bound in madness,
And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished,
unupbraiding,
Gleamed in the night.¹ I wandered o'er, till thou,
O King of sadness, 770
Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected
gladness.

SIXTH SPIRIT.

Ah, Sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the
air,
But treads with killing² footstep, and fans with silent
wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and
gentlest bear;
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes
above
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy
feet,
Dream visions of ærial joy, and call the monster,
Love,
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom
now we greet.

CHORUS.

Though Ruin now Love's shadow be, 780
Following him, destroyingly,
On Death's white and wingèd steed,
Which the fleetest cannot flee,
Trampling down both flower and weed,
Man and beast, and foul and fair,
Like a tempest through the air ;
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
Woundless though in heart or limb.

PROMETHEUS.

Spirits ! how know ye this shall be ?

CHORUS.

In the atmosphere we breathe, 790
As buds grow red when the snowstorms flee,
From spring gathering up beneath,
Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,
And the wandering herdsmen know
That the white-thorn soon will blow :
Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
When they struggle to increase,
Are to us as soft winds be
To shepherd boys, the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee. 800

Ione. Where are the Spirits fled ?

Pan. Only a sense

Remains of them, like the omnipotence
Of music, when the inspired voice and lute
Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,
Which through the deep and labyrinthine soul,
Like echoes through long caverns, wind and
roll.

Pro. How fair these air-born shapes ! and yet I feel
Most vain all hope but love ; and thou art far,
Asia ! who, when my being overflowed,
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine 810
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.
All things are still. Alas ! how heavily
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart ;
Though I should dream I could even sleep with
grief

If slumber were denied not. I would fain
Be what it is my destiny to be,
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,
Or sink into the original gulf of things :
There is no agony, and no solace left ; 819
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.

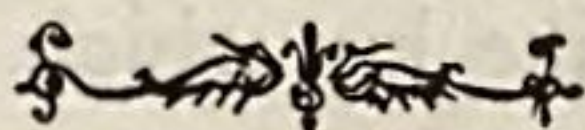
Pan. Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee

The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when
The shadow of thy spirit falls on her ?

Pro. I said all hope was vain but love : thou lovest.

Pan. Deeply in truth ; but the eastern star looks white,
And Asia waits in that far Indian vale
The scene of her sad exile ; rugged once
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine ;
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which
flow 830

Among the woods and waters, from the aether
Of her transforming presence, which would fade
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell !



Act Second.

Scene I.

*Morning. A lovely Vale in the Indian Caucasus.
Asia alone.*

Asia. From all the blasts of Heaven thou hast descended :
Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes
Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,
And beatings haunt the desolated heart,
Which should have learnt repose : thou hast
descended
Cradled in tempests ; thou dost wake, O spring !
O child of many winds ! As suddenly
Thou comest as the memory of a dream,
Which now is sad because it hath been sweet ;
Like genius, or like joy which riseth up 10
As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds
The desert of our life.
This is the season, this the day, the hour ;
At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,
Too long desired, too long delaying, come !
How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl !

The point of one white star is quivering still
Deep in the orange light of widening morn
Beyond the purple mountains : through a chasm
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake 20
Reflects it : now it wanes : it gleams again
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads
Of woven cloud unravel in pale air :
'Tis lost ! and through yon peaks of cloudlike
snow

The roseate sunlight quivers : hear I not
The Æolian music of her sea-green plumes
Winnowing the crimson dawn ?

Panthea enters.

I feel, I see
Those eyes which burn through smiles that fade in
tears,
Like stars half quenched in mists of silver dew.
Belovèd and most beautiful, who wearest 30
The shadow of that soul by which I live,
How late thou art ! the spherèd sun had climbed
The sea ; my heart was sick with hope, before
The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

Pan. Pardon, great sister ! but my wings were faint
With the delight of a remembered dream,
As are the noontide plumes of summer winds

Satiate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep
Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm,
Before the sacred Titan's fall and thy 40
Unhappy love had made, through use and pity,
Both love and woe familiar to my heart
As they had grown to thine : erewhile I slept
Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean
Within dim bowers of green and purple moss,
Our young Ione's soft and milky arms
Locked then, as now, behind my dark, moist hair,
While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within
The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom :
But not as now, since I am made the wind 50
Which fails beneath the music that I bear
Of thy most wordless converse ; since dissolved
Into the sense with which love talks, my rest
Was troubled and yet sweet ; my waking hours
Too full of care and pain.

Asia. Lift up thine eyes,
And let me read thy dream.

Pan. As I have said,
With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.
The mountain mists, condensing at our voice
Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,
From the keen ice shielding our linkèd sleep. 60

Then two dreams came. One, I remember not.
But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs
Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night
Grew radiant with the glory of that form
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,
Faint with intoxication of keen joy :
“ Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world
With loveliness—more fair than aught but her,
Whose shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me.” 70
I lifted them : the overpowering light
Of that immortal shape was shadowed o’er
By love ; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,
And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,
Steamed forth like vaporous fire ; an atmosphere
Which wrapped me in its all-dissolving power,
As the warm aether of the morning sun
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.
I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt
His presence flow and mingle through my blood 80
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
And I was thus absorbed, until it passed,
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,
Gathering again in drops upon the pines,
And tremulous as they, in the deep night

My being was condensed ; and as the rays
Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear
His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died
Like footsteps of weak melody : thy name
Among the many sounds alone I heard 90
Of what might be articulate ; though still
I listened through the night when sound was
none.

Ione wakened then, and said to me :
“ Canst thou divine what troubles me to-night ?
I always knew what I desired before,
Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.
But now I cannot tell thee what I seek ;
I know not ; something sweet, since it is sweet
Even to desire ; it is thy sport, false sister ;
Thou hast discovered some enchantment old, 100
Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept
And mingled it with thine : for when just now
We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips
The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth
Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,
Quivered between our intertwining arms.”
I answered not, for the Eastern star grew pale,
But fled to thee.

Asia.

Thou speakest, but thy words

Are as the air : I feel them not : O lift

Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul ! 110

Pan. I lift them, though they droop beneath the load
Of that they would express : what canst thou
see

But thine own fairest shadow imaged there ?

Asia. Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless heaven
Contracted to two circles underneath
Their long, fine lashes ; dark, far, measureless,
Orb within orb, and line through line inwoven.

Pan. Why lookest thou as if a spirit passed ?

Asia. There is a change : beyond their inmost depth
I see a shade, a shape : 'tis He, arrayed 120
In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread
Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.
Prometheus, it is thine ! depart not yet !
Say not those smiles that we shall meet again
Within that bright pavilion which their beams
Shall build on the waste world ? The dream is
told.

What shape is that between us ? Its rude hair
Roughens the wind that lifts it, its regard
Is wild and quick, yet 'tis a thing of air,
For through its grey robe gleams the golden dew 130
Whose stars the noon has quenched not.

DREAM.

Follow ! Follow !

Pan. It is mine other dream.*Asia.* It disappears.

Pan. It passes now into my mind. Methought
As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds
Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond tree,
When swift from the white Scythian wilderness
A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost :
I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down ;
But on each leaf was stamped, as the bluebells
Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief, 140
O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW !

Asia. As you speak, your words
Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep
With shapes. Methought among the lawns together
We wandered, underneath the young grey dawn,
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind ;
And the white dew on the new-bladed grass,
Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently :
And there was more which I remember not : 150
But on the shadows of the morning clouds,
Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written

FOLLOW, O, FOLLOW! as they vanished by;
 And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had
 fallen,
 The like was stamped, as with a withering fire.
 A wind arose among the pines; it shook
 The clinging music from their boughs, and then
 Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
 Were heard: OH, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW ME!
 And then I said: "Panthea, look on me." 160
 But in the depth of those belovèd eyes
 Still I saw, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

ECHO.

Follow, Follow!

Pan. The crags, this clear spring morning, mock our voices
 As they were spirit-tongued.

Asia. It is some being
 Around the crags. What fine clear sounds! O,
 list!

ECHOES (*unseen*).

Echoes we: listen!

We cannot stay:

As dew-stars glisten

Then fade away—

Child of Ocean!

170

Asia. Hark ! Spirits speak. The liquid responses
Of their aërial tongues yet sound.

Pan.

I hear.

ECHOES.

O, follow, follow,
As our voice recedeth
Through the caverns hollow
Where the forest spreadeth ;

(*More distant.*)

O, follow, follow !
Through the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
Where the wild bee never flew,
Through the noontide darkness deep,
By the odour-breathing sleep
Of faint night flowers, and the waves
At the fountain-lighted caves,
While our music, wild and sweet,
Mocks thy gently-falling feet,
Child of Ocean !

180

Asia. Shall we pursue the sound ? It grows more faint
And distant.

Pan.

List ! the strain floats nearer now.

ECHOES.

In the world unknown 190
Sleeps a voice unspoken ;
By thy step alone
Can its rest be broken ;
Child of Ocean !

Asia. How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind !

ECHOES.

O, follow, follow !
Through the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
By the woodland noontide dew ;
By the forests, lakes, and fountains 200
Through the many-folded mountains ;
To the rents, and gulfs, and chasms,
Where the earth reposed from spasms,
On the day when he and thou
Parted, to commingle now ;
Child of Ocean !

Asia. Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,
And follow, ere the voices fade away.

Scene II.

A Forest, intermingled with Rocks and Caverns.

*Asia and Panthea pass into it. Two young Fauns
are sitting on a Rock, listening.*

SEMICHORUS I. OF SPIRITS.

The path through which that lovely twain
Have passed by cedar, pine, and yew,
And each dark tree that ever grew,
Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue ;
Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,
Can pierce its interwoven bowers,
Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,
Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
Between the trunks of the hoar trees,
Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers 10
Of the green laurel, blown anew ;
And bends, and then fades silently,
One frail and fair anemone :
Or when some star of many a one
That climbs and wanders through steep night,
Has found the cleft through which alone
Beams fall from high those depths upon

Ere it is borne away, away,
By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,
It scatters drops of golden light, 20
Like lines of rain that ne'er unite :
And the gloom divine is all around ;
And underneath is the mossy ground.

SEMICHORUS II.

There the voluptuous nightingales
Are awake through all the broad noonday :
When one with bliss or sadness fails,
And through the windless ivy-boughs,
Sick with sweet love, droops dying away
On its mate's music-panting bosom ;
Another from the swinging blossom, 30
Watching to catch the languid close
Of the last strain, then lifts on high
The wings of the weak melody,
'Till some new strain of feeling bear
The song, and all the woods are mute ;
When there is heard through the dim air
The rush of wings, and rising there
Like many a lake-surrounded ' flute
Sounds overflow the listener's brain
So sweet, that joy is almost pain. 40

SEMICHORUS I.

There those enchanted eddies play
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,
By Demogorgon's mighty law,
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
All spirits on that secret way ;
As inland boats are driven to Ocean
Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw :
And first there comes a gentle sound
To those in talk or slumber bound,
And wakes the destined ¹ : soft emotion, 50
Attracts, impels them : those who saw
Say from the breathing earth behind
There steams a plume-uplifting wind
Which drives them on their path, while they
Believe their own swift wings and feet
The sweet desires within obey :
And so they float upon their way,
Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,
The storm of sound is driven along,
Sucked up and hurrying ² : as they fleet, ³ 60
Behind its gathering billows meet
And to the fatal mountain bear
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

First Faun. Canst thou imagine where those spirits live
Which make such delicate music in the woods?
We haunt within the least frequented caves
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,
Yet never meet them, though we hear them oft:
Where may they hide themselves?

Second Faun. 'Tis hard to tell:
I have heard those more skilled in spirits say, 70
The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun
Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave
The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,
Are the pavilions where such dwell and float
Under the green and golden atmosphere
Which noontide kindles through the woven leaves;
And when these burst, and the thin fiery air,
The which they breathed within those lucent domes,
Ascends to flow like meteors through the night,
They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed, 80
And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire,
Under the waters of the earth again.

First Faun. If such live thus, have others other lives,
Under pink blossoms or within the bells
Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,
Or on their dying odours, when they die,
Or in the sunlight of the spherèd dew?

Second Faun. Ay, many more which we may well divine.
 But should we stay to speak, noontide would come,
 And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn, 90
 And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs
 Of Fate, and Chance, and God, and Chaos old,
 And Love, and the chained Titan's woful doom,
 And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth
 One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer
 Our solitary twilights, and which charm
 To silence the unenvying nightingales.

Scene III.

A Pinnacle of Rock among Mountains.

Asia and Panthea.

Pan. Hither the sound has borne us—to the realm
 Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,
 Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,
 Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up
 Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
 And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,
 That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they
 drain
 To deep intoxication; and uplift,

Like Mænads who cry loud, Evøe ! Evøe !

The voice which is contagion to the world. 10

Asia. Fit throne for such a Power ! Magnificent !

How glorious art thou, Earth ! And if thou be

The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,

Though evil stain its work, and it should be

Like its creation, weak yet beautiful,

I could fall down and worship that and thee.

Even now my heart adoreth. Wonderful !

Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain :

Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,

As a lake, paving in the morning sky, 20

With azure waves which burst in silver light,

Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on

Under the curdling winds, and islanding

The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,

Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,

Dim twilight-lawns and stream-illumined caves,

And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist ;

And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains

From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling

The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray, 30

From some Atlantic islet scattered up,

Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.

The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl

Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines
Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,
Awful as silence. Hark ! the rushing snow !
The sun-awakened avalanche ! whose mass,
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
Is loosened, and the nations echo round, 41
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

Pan. Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking
In crimson foam, even at our feet ! it rises
As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon
Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

Asia. The fragments of the clouds are scattered up ;
The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair ;
Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes ; my brain
Grows dizzy ; I see thin shapes within the mist. 50

Pan. A countenance with beckoning smiles : there burns
An azure fire within its golden locks !
Another and another : hark ! they speak !

SONG OF SPIRITS.

To the deep, to the deep,
Down, down !
Through the shade of sleep,

Through the cloudy strife
Of Death and of Life ;
Through the veil and the bar
Of things which seem and are, 60
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,
Down, down !

While the sound whirls around,
Down, down !
As the fawn draws the hound,
As the lightning the vapour,
As a weak moth the taper ;
Death, despair ; love, sorrow ;
Time both ; to-day, to-morrow ;
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone, 70
Down, down !

Through the grey, void abysm,
Down, down !
Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not,
And the cavern-crags wear not
The radiance of Heaven,
Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is one pervading, one alone,
Down, down ! 80

In the depth of the deep
Down, down !
Like veiled lightning asleep,
Like the spark nursed in embers,
The last look Love remembers,
Like a diamond, which shines
On the dark wealth of mines,
A spell is treasured but for thee alone.
Down, down !

We have bound thee, we guide thee ; 90
Down, down !
With the bright form beside thee ;
Resist not the weakness,
Such strength is in meekness
That the Eternal, the Immortal,
Must unloose through life's portal
The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne,
By that alone.

Scene IV.

The Cave of Demogorgon.

Asia and Panthea.

Pan. What veiled form sits on that ebon throne ?

Asia. The veil has fallen.

Pan. I see a mighty darkness
Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
Dart round, as light from the meridian sun,
Ungazed upon and shapeless ; neither limb,
Nor form, nor outline ; yet we feel it is
A living spirit.

Dem. Ask what thou wouldst know.

Asia. What canst thou tell ?

Dem. All things thou dar'st demand.

Asia. Who made the living world ?

Dem. God.

Asia. Who made all
That it contains ? thought, passion, reason, will, 10
Imagination ?

Dem. God : Almighty God.

Asia. Who made that sense which, when the winds of
spring
In rarest visitation, or the voice
Of one belovèd heard in youth alone,
Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim
The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,
And leaves this peopled earth a solitude
When it returns no more ?

Dem. Merciful God.

Asia. And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,

Which from the links of the great chain of things,
To every thought within the mind of man, 21
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels
Under the load towards the pit of death ;
Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate ;
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood ;
Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech
Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day ;
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell ?

Dem. He reigns.

Asia. Utter his name : a world pining in pain
Asks but his name : curses shall drag him down. 30

Dem. He reigns.

Asia. I feel, I know it : who ?

Dem. He reigns.

Asia. Who reigns ? There was the Heaven and Earth
at first,
And Light and Love ; then Saturn, from whose
throne

Time fell, an envious shadow : such the state
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,
As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves
Before the wind or sun has withered them,
And semivital worms ; but he refused
The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,

The skill which wields the elements, the thought
Which pierces this dim universe like light, 41
Self-empire, and the majesty of love ;
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus
Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,
And with this law alone, "Let man be free,"
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.
To know no faith, nor love, nor law, to be
Omnipotent but friendless, is to reign ;
And Jove now reigned ; for on the race of man
First famine, and then toil, and then disease, 50
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,
Fell ; and the unseasonable seasons drove
With alternating shafts of frost and fire,
Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves :
And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,
And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle
Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,
So ruining the lair wherein they raged.
Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers, 60
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings
The shape of Death ; and Love he sent to bind
The disunited tendrils of that vine

Which bears the wine of life, the human heart ;
And he tamed fire which, like some beast of prey,
Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath
The frown of man ; and tortured to his will
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,
And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms 70
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.
He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the universe ;
And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,
Which shook but fell not ; and the harmonious
mind,
Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song ;
And music lifted up the listening spirit
Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,
Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound ;
And human hands first mimicked and then mocked,
With moulded limbs more lovely than its own, 81
The human form, till marble grew divine ;
And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see
Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.
He told the hidden power of herbs and springs,
And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.
He taught the implicated orbits woven
Of the wide-wandering stars ; and how the sun

Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye
Gazes not on the interlunar sea. 91

He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,
The tempest-wingèd chariots of the Ocean,
And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then
Were built, and through their snowlike columns
flowed

The warm winds, and the azure aether shone,
And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.
Such, the alleviations of his state,
Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs
Withering in destined pain: but who reigns^r down 100
Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while
Man looks on his creation like a God
And sees that it is glorious, drives him on
The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,
The outcast, the abandoned, the alone?
Not Jove: while yet his frown shook heaven, ay
when

His adversary from adamantine chains
Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare
Who is his master? Is he too a slave?

Dem. All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil: 110
Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

Asia. Whom called'st thou God?

Dem. I spoke but as ye speak,
For Jove is the supreme of living things.

Asia. Who is the master of the slave?

Dem. If the abysm
Could vomit forth its secrets—but a voice
Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;
For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
On the revolving world? What to bid speak
Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change? To
these

All things are subject but eternal Love. 120

Asia. So much I asked before, and my heart gave
The response thou hast given; and of such truths
Each to itself must be the oracle.
One more demand; and do thou answer me
As my own soul would answer, did it know
That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise
Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world:
When shall the destined hour arrive?

Dem. Behold!

Asia. The rocks are cloven, and through the purple
night

I see cars drawn by rainbow-wingèd steeds 130
Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands

A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars :
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
As if the thing they loved fled on before,
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright
locks

Stream like a comet's flashing hair : they all
Sweep onward.

Dem. These are the immortal Hours, 140
Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

Asia. A spirit with a dreadful countenance
Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulf.
Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,
Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me?
Speak !

Spirit. I am the shadow of a destiny
More dread than is my aspect : ere yon planet
Has set, the darkness which ascends with me
Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.

Asia. What meanest thou ?

Pan. That terrible shadow floats 150
Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke
Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.

Lo! it ascends the car; the coursers fly
Terrified: watch its path among the stars
Blackening the night!

Asia. Thus I am answered: strange!

Pan. See, near the verge, another chariot stays;
An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,
Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim
Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit
That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope; 160
How its soft smiles attract the soul! as light
Lures wingèd insects through the lampless air.

SPIRIT.

My coursers are fed with the lightning,
They drink of the whirlwind's stream,
And when the red morning is bright'ning
They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;
They have strength for their swiftness I deem,
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire: and their speed makes night kindle;
I fear: they outstrip the Typhoon; 170
Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle
We encircle the earth and the moon:
We shall rest from long labours at noon:
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

Scene V.

*The Car pauses within a Cloud on the Top of a
snowy Mountain.*

Asia, Panthea, and the Spirit of the Hour.

SPIRIT.

On the brink of the night and the morning
My coursers are wont to respire ;
But the Earth has just whispered a warning
That their flight must be swifter than fire :
They shall drink the hot speed of desire !

Asia. Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath
Would give them swifter speed.

Spirit. Alas ! it could not.

Pan. Oh, Spirit ! pause, and tell whence is the light
Which fills the cloud ? The sun is yet unrisen.

Spirit. The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo 10
Is held in heaven by wonder ; and the light
Which fills this vapour, as the aërial hue
Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,
Flows from thy mighty sister.

Pan. Yes, I feel—

Asia. What is it with thee, sister ? Thou art pale.

Pan. How thou art changed ! I dare not look on thee ;
I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure
The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change
Is working in the elements, which suffer
Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell 20
That on the day when the clear hyaline
Was cloven at thy uprise, and thou didst stand
Within a veined shell, which floated on
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
Among the Ægean isles, and by the shores
Which bear thy name,—love, like the atmosphere
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven
And the deep ocean and the sunless caves,
And all that dwells within them ; till grief cast 30
Eclipse upon the soul from which it came :
Such art thou now ; nor is it I alone,
Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,
But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.
Hear'st thou not sounds i' the air which speak the
love
Of all articulate beings ? Feel'st thou not
The inanimate winds enamoured of thee ? List !
[*Music.*

Asia. Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his

Whose echoes they are : yet all love is sweet,
 Given or returned. Common as light is love, 40
 And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
 Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
 It makes the reptile equal to the God :
 They who inspire it most are fortunate,
 As I am now ; but those who feel it most
 Are happier still, after long sufferings,
 As I shall soon become.

Pan. List ! Spirits speak.

VOICE in the Air, singing.

Life of Life ! thy lips enkindle
 With their love the breath between them ;
 And thy smiles before they dwindle 50
 Make the cold air fire ; then screen them
 In those looks, where whoso gazes
 Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light ! thy limbs^r are burning
 Through the vest which seems to hide them ;
 As the radiant lines of morning
 Through the clouds ere they divide them ;
 And this atmosphere divinest
 Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others ; none beholds thee, 60
But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee
From the sight, that liquid splendour,
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever !

Lamp of Earth ! where'er thou movest
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,
And the souls of whom thou lovest
Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail, as I am failing, 70
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing !

ASIA.

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing ;
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside the helm conducting it,
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
It seems to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many-winding river,
Between mountains, woods, abysses, 80
A paradise of wildernesses !

Till, like one in slumber bound,
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound.

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions
In music's most serene dominions,
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven ;
And we sail on, away, afar,
Without a course, without a star,
But by the instinct of sweet music driven ; 90
Till through Elysian garden islets
By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
Where never mortal pinnacle glided,
The boat of my desire is guided :
Realms where the air we breathe is love,
Which in the winds and¹ on the waves doth move,
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have passed Age's icy caves,
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray : 100
Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day ;
A paradise of vaulted bowers,
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,

And watery paths that wind between
Wildernesses calm and green,
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,
And rest, having beheld—somewhat like thee—
Which walk upon the sea, and chant melo-
diously !

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Act Third.

Scene I.

*Heaven. Jupiter on his Throne ; Thetis and the
other Deities assembled.*

Jup. Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share
The glory and the strength of him ye serve,
Rejoice ! henceforth I am omnipotent.
All else had been subdued to me ; alone
The soul of man, like unextinguished fire,
Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and
doubt,
And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,
Hurling up insurrection, which might make
Our antique empire insecure, though built
On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear ;

10

And though my curses through the pendulous
air,

Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,
And cling to it ; though under my wrath's night¹
It climbs the crags of life, step after step,
Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandalled feet,
It yet remains supreme o'er misery,
Aspiring, unrepressed, yet soon to fall :
Even now have I begotten a strange wonder,
That fatal child, the terror of the earth,
Who waits but till the destined² hour arrive, 20
Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne
The dreadful might of ever-living limbs
Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,
To redescend and trample out the spark.

Pour forth heaven's wine, Idæan Ganymede,
And let it fill the Dædal cups like fire,
And from the flower-inwoven soil divine
Ye all-triumphant harmonies arise,
As dew from earth under the twilight stars :
Drink ! be the nectar circling through your
veins 30

The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods,
Till exultation burst in one wide voice

Like music from Elysian winds.

And thou

Ascend beside me, veiled in the light
Of the desire which makes thee one with me,
Thetis, bright image of eternity!
When thou didst cry, "Insufferable might!
God! Spare me! I sustain not the quick flames,
The penetrating presence; all my being,
Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw 40
Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,
Sinking through its foundations:" even then
Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third
Mightier than either, which, unbodied now,
Between us floats, felt, although unbeheld,
Waiting the incarnation, which ascends,
(Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels
Grinding the winds?) from Demogorgon's throne.
Victory! victory! Feelest thou not, O world,
The earthquake of his chariot thundering up 50
Olympus?

[The car of the Hour arrives. Demogorgon descends, and moves towards the throne of Jupiter.]

Awful shape, what art thou? Speak!

Dem. Eternity. Demand no direr name.

Descend, and follow me down the abyss.
I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child ;
Mightier than thee : and we must dwell together
Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not.
The tyranny of heaven none may retain,
Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee :
Yet if thou wilt, as 'tis the destiny
Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead, 60
Put forth thy might.

Jup. Detested prodigy !
Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons
I trample thee ! thou lingerest ?
Mercy ! mercy !
No pity, no release, no respite ! Oh,
That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge,
Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,
On Caucasus ! he would not doom me thus.
Gentle, and just, and dreadless, is he not
The monarch of the world ? What then art thou ?
No refuge ! no appeal !

Sink with me then, 70
We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,
Even as a vulture and a snake outspent
Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,
Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock

Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire,
And whelm on them into the bottomless void
This desolated world, and thee, and me,
The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck
Of that for which they combated.

Ai, Ai!

The elements obey me not. I sink 80
Dizzily down, ever, for ever down.
And, like a cloud, mine enemy above
Darkens my fall with victory! Ai, Ai!

Scene II.

The Mouth of a great River in the Island Atlantis.

*Ocean is discovered reclining near the Shore ;
Apollo stands beside him.*

Ocean. He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's
frown?

Apollo. Ay, when the strife was ended which made
dim

The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,
The terrors of his eye illumined heaven
With sanguine light, through the thick ragged
skirts

Of the victorious darkness, as he fell :
Like the last glare of day's red agony,
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,
Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

Ocean. He sunk to the abyss? To the dark void? 10

Apollo. An eagle so, caught in some bursting cloud
On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings
Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes
Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded
By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail
Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length
Prone, and the ærial ice clings over it.

Ocean. Henceforth the fields of Heaven-reflecting sea,
Which are my realm, will heave, unstained with
blood,

Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn 20
Swayed by the summer air ; my streams will flow
Round many-peopled continents,¹ and round
Fortunate isles ; and from their glassy thrones
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see
The floating bark of the light-laden moon
With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea ;
Tracking their path no more by blood and groans,

And desolation, and the mingled voice 30
Of slavery and command ; but by the light
Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours,
And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices,
That sweetest music, such as spirits love.

Apollo. And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make
My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse
Darkens the sphere I guide ; but list, I hear
The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit
That sits on^r the morning star.

Ocean. Thou must away ;
Thy steeds will pause at even, till when farewell ; 40
The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it
With azure calm out of the emerald urns
Which stand for ever full beside my throne.
Behold the Nereids, under the green sea,
Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like
stream,
Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair
With garlands pied and starry sea-flower crowns,
Hastening to grace their mighty sister's joy.

[*A sound of waves is heard.*

It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.
Peace, monster ; I come now. Farewell.

Apollo.

Farewell. 50

Scene III.

Caucasus.

Prometheus, Hercules, Ione, the Earth, Spirits. Asia and Panthea, borne in the car with the Spirit of the Hour. Hercules unbinds Prometheus, who descends.

Herc. Most glorious among spirits, thus doth strength
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love
And thee, who art the form they animate,
Minister like a slave.

Pro. Thy gentle words
Are sweeter even than freedom long desired
And long delayed.

Asia, thou light of life,
Shadow of beauty unbeheld : and ye,
Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain
Sweet to remember, through your love and care :
Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave, 10
All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,
Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,
And paved with veined emerald ; and a fountain
Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.
From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears
Like snow or silver, or long diamond spires,

Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light :
 And there is heard the ever-moving air,
 Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,
 And bees ; and all around are mossy seats, 20
 And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass ;
 A simple dwelling, which shall be our own ;
 Where we will sit and talk of time and change,
 As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.
 What can hide man from mutability ?
 And if ye sigh, then I will smile ; and thou,
 Ione, shalt chant fragments of sea-music,
 Until I weep, when ye shall smile away
 The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.
 We will entangle buds and flowers and beams 30
 Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
 Strange combinations out of common things,
 Like human babes in their brief innocence ;
 And we will search, with looks and words of love,
 For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last,
 Our unexhausted spirits ; and like lutes
 Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,
 Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,
 From difference sweet where discord cannot be ;
 And hither come, sped on the charmèd winds, 40
 Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees

From every flower aërial Enna feeds,
At their own island-homes in Himera,
The echoes of the human world, which tell
Of the low voice of love, almost unheard,
And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,
Itself the echo of the heart, and all
That tempers or improves man's life, now free ;
And lovely apparitions, dim at first,
Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright 50
From the embrace of beauty, whence the forms
Of which these are the phantoms, casts on them
The gathered rays which are reality,
Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy,
And arts, though unimagined, yet to be.
The wandering voices and the shadows these
Of all that man becomes, the mediators
Of that best worship love, by him and us
Given and returned ; swift shapes and sounds, which
grow 60
More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,
And veil by veil, evil and error fall :
Such virtue has the cave and place around.

[Turning to the Spirit of the Hour.]

For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,

Give her that curvèd shell, which Proteus old
Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it
A voice to be accomplished, and which thou
Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

Ione. Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely
Than all thy sisters, this is the mystic shell ; 70
See the pale azure fading into silver
Lining it with a soft yet glowing light :
Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there ?

Spirit. It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean :
Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange.

Pro. Go, borne over the cities of mankind
On whirlwind-footed coursers : once again
Outspeed the sun around the orbèd world ;
And as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,
Thou breathe into the many-folded shell, 80
Loosening its mighty music ; it shall be
As thunder mingled with clear echoes : then
Return ; and thou shalt dwell beside our cave.
And thou, O Mother Earth !—

The Earth. I hear, I feel ;
Thy lips are on me, and thy touch runs down
Even to the adamantine central gloom
Along these marble nerves ; 'tis life, 'tis joy,
And through my withered, old, and icy frame

The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down
 Circling. Henceforth the many children fair 90
 Folded in my sustaining arms ; all plants,
 And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged,
 And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes,
 Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom,
 Draining the poison of despair, shall take
 And interchange sweet nutriment ; to me
 Shall they become like sister-antelopes
 By one fair dam, snow-white, and swift as wind,
 Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.
 The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float 100
 Under the stars like balm : night-folded flowers
 Shall suck unwithering^r hues in their repose :
 And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather
 Strength for the coming day, and all its joy :
 And death shall be the last embrace of her
 Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother
 Folding her child, says, “ Leave me not again.”

Asia. Oh, mother ! wherefore speak the name of death ?
 Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and
 speak,
 Who die ?

The Earth. It would avail not to reply : 110
 Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known

But to the uncommunicating dead.

Death is the veil which those who live call life :

They sleep, and it is lifted : and meanwhile

In mild variety the seasons mild

With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,

And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,

And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's

All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain

Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild, 120

Shall clothe the forests and the fields, ay, even

The crag-built deserts of the barren deep,

With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.

And thou ! There is a cavern where my spirit

Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain

Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it

Became mad too, and built a temple there,

And spoke, and were oracular, and lured

The erring nations round to mutual war, 129

And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee ;

Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds

A violet's exhalation, and it fills

With a serener light and crimson air

Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around ;

It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,

And the dark linkèd ivy tangling wild,

And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms
Which star the winds with points of coloured light,
As they rain through them, and bright golden globes
Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven, 140
And through their veinèd leaves and amber stems
The flowers whose purple and translucent bowls
Stand ever mantling with aërial dew,
The drink of spirits ; and it circles round,
Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams,
Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,
Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.
Arise ! appear !

[*A Spirit rises in the likeness of a winged child.*

This is my torch-bearer ;
Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing
On eyes from which he kindled it anew 150
With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,
For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward,
And guide this company beyond the peak
Of Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain,
And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,
Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes
With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,
And up the green ravine, across the vale,
Beside the windless and crystalline pool,

Where ever lies, on unerasing waves, 160
The image of a temple, built above,
Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,
And palm-like capital, and over-wrought,
And populous most with living imagery,
Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.
It is deserted now, but once it bore
Thy name, Prometheus; there the emulous youths
Bore to thy honour through the divine gloom 169
The lamp which was thine emblem; even as those
Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope
Into the grave, across the night of life,
As thou hast borne it most triumphantly
To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell.
Beside that temple is the destined cave.

Scene IV.

*A Forest. In the background a Cave. Prometheus,
Asia, Panthea, Ione, and the Spirit of the Earth.*

Ione. Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides
Under the leaves! how on its head there burns
A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams
Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves,

The splendour drops in flakes upon the grass !
Knowest thou it ?

Pan. It is the delicate spirit
That guides the earth through heaven. From afar
The populous constellations call that light
The loveliest of the planets ; and sometimes
It floats along the spray of the salt sea, 10
Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,
Or walks through fields or cities while men sleep,
Or o'er the mountain-tops, or down the rivers,
Or through the green waste wilderness, as now,
Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned
It loved our sister Asia, and it came
Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light
Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted
As one bit by a dipsas, and with her
It made its childish confidence, and told her 20
All it had known or seen, for it saw much,
Yet idly reasoned what it saw ; and called her,
For whence it sprang it knew not, nor do I,
“ Mother, dear mother.”

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH (*running to Asia*).

Mother, dearest mother ;
May I then talk with thee as I was wont ?

May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,
After thy looks have made them tired of joy?
May I then play beside thee the long noons,
When work is none in the bright silent air?

Asia. I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth 30
Can cherish thee unenvied: speak, I pray:
Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.

Spirit of the Earth. Mother, I am grown wiser, though a
child

Cannot be wise like thee, within this day;
And happier too; happier and wiser both.
Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly
worms,

And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs
That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever
An hindrance to my walks o'er the green world:
And that, among the haunts of humankind, 40
Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks,
Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,
Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,
Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts
Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man;
And women too, ugliest of all things evil,
(Though fair, even in a world where thou art fair,
When good and kind, free and sincere like thee,)

When false or frowning made me sick at heart
To pass them, though they slept, and I unseen. 50
Well, my path lately lay through a great city
Into the woody hills surrounding it :
A sentinel was sleeping at the gate :
When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook
The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet
Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all ;
A long, long sound, as it would never end :
And all the inhabitants leapt suddenly
Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,
Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet 60
The music pealed along. I hid myself
Within a fountain in the public square,
Where I lay like the reflex of the moon
Seen in a wave under green leaves ; and soon
Those ugly human shapes and visages
Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,
Passed floating through the air, and fading still
Into the winds that scattered them ; and those
From whom they passed seemed mild and lovely
forms
After some foul disguise had fallen, and all 70
Were somewhat changed, and after brief surprise
And greetings of delighted wonder, all

Went to their sleep again : and when the dawn
Came, wouldst thou think that toads, and snakes,
and efts,

Could e'er be beautiful ? yet so they were,
And that with little change of shape or hue :
All things had put their evil nature off :
I cannot tell my joy, when o'er a lake
Upon a drooping bough with nightshade twined,
I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward 80
And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,
With quick long beaks, and in the deep there
lay

Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky ;
So with my thoughts full of these happy changes,
We meet again, the happiest change of all.

Asia. And never will we part, till thy chaste sister,
Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon,
Will look on thy more warm and equal light
Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow
And love thee.

Spirit of the Earth. What ! as Asia loves Prometheus ?

Asia. Peace, wanton, thou art yet not old enough. 91
Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes
To multiply your lovely selves, and fill
With spherèd fires the interlunar air ?

Spirit of the Earth. Nay, mother, while my sister trims
her lamp

'Tis hard I should go darkling.

Asia. Listen ; look !

The Spirit of the Hour enters.

Pro. We feel what thou hast heard and seen : yet speak.

Spirit of the Hour. Soon as the sound had ceased whose
thunder filled

The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,
'There was a change : the impalpable thin air 100
And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,
As if the sense of love, dissolved in them,
Had folded itself round the spherèd world.
My vision then grew clear, and I could see
Into the mysteries of the universe :
Dizzy as with delight I floated down,
Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,
My coursers sought their birthplace in the sun,
Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil
Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire ; 110
And where my moon-like car will stand within
A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms
Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,
And you, fair nymphs, looking the love we feel,—

In memory of the tidings it has borne,—
 Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,
 Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,
 And open to the bright and liquid sky.
 Yoked to it by an amphisbenic snake
 The likeness of those wingèd steeds will mock 120
 The flight from which they find repose. Alas,
 Whither has wandered now my partial tongue
 When all remains untold which ye would hear?
 As I have said, I floated to the earth :
 It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss
 To move, to breathe, to be ; I wandering went
 Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,
 And first was disappointed not to see
 Such mighty change as I had felt within 129
 Expressed in outward things ; but soon I looked,
 And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked
 One with the other even as spirits do,
 None fawned, none trampled ; hate, disdain, or fear,
 Self-love, or self-contempt, on human brows
 No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,
 “ All hope abandon ye who enter here ; ”
 None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear
 Gazed on another's eye of cold command,
 Until the subject of a tyrant's will

Became, worse fate, the abject of his own, 140
Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.
None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines
Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak ;
None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart
The sparks of love and hope till there remained
Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,
And the wretch crept a vampire among men,
Infecting all with his own hideous ill ;
None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk
Which makes the heart deny the “ yes ” it breathes,
Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy 151
With such a self-mistrust as has no name.
And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind
As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew
On the wide earth, passed ; gentle radiant forms,
From custom’s evil taint exempt and pure ;
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
Looking emotions once they feared to feel,
And changed to all which once they dared not be,
Yet being now, made earth like heaven ; nor pride,
Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame, 161
The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,
Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.
’Thrones, altars, judgment-seats, and prisons, wherein,

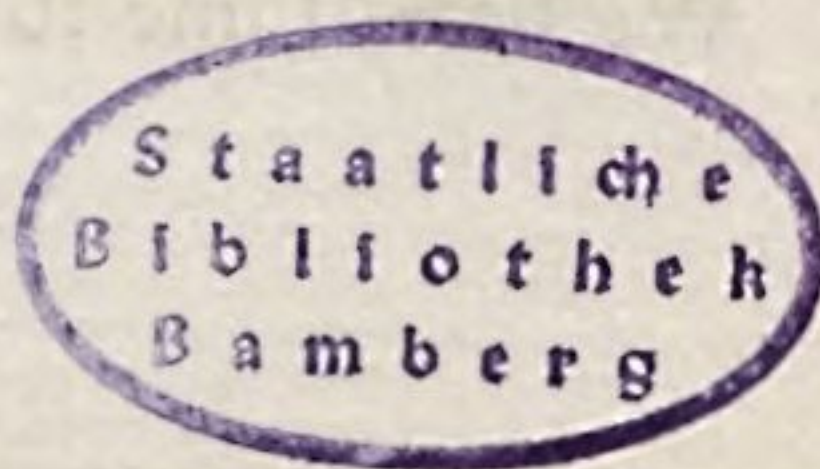
And beside which, by wretched men were borne
Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes
Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,
Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,
The ghosts of a no more remembered fame,
Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth
In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs 171
Of those who were their conquerors, mouldering
round^r:

Those imaged to the pride of kings and priests,
A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide
As is the world it wasted, and are now
But an astonishment ; even so the tools
And emblems of its last captivity,
Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,
Stand, not o'erthrown, but unregarded now ;
And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,
Which, under many a name and many a form 181
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark, and execrable,
Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world,
And which the nations, panic-stricken, served
With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and
love

Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,
And slain among men's unreclaiming tears,

Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,
Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned
shrines.

The painted veil, by those who were, called life,
Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread, 191
All men believed and hoped, is torn aside ;
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man :
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself ; just, gentle, wise, but man :
Passionless, no, yet free from guilt or pain,¹
Which were, for his will made or suffered them,
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
From chance, and death, and mutability, 201
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.



Act Fourth.

Scene.

A Part of the Forest near the Cave of Prometheus.

Panthea and Ione are sleeping ; they awaken gradually during the first Song.

VOICE of unseen Spirits.

The pale stars are gone !

For the sun, their swift shepherd,

To the folds them compelling,

In the depths of the dawn,

Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee

Beyond his blue dwelling,

As fawns flee the leopard.

But where are ye ?

A Train of dark Forms and Shadows passes by confusedly, singing.

Here, oh, here !

We bear the bier

Of the Father of many a cancelled year !

Spectres we

Of the Dead Hours be,

We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew
Hair, not yew !
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew !
Be the faded flowers
Of Death's bare bowers
Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours ! 20

Haste, oh, haste !
As shades are chased,
Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste.
We melt away,
Like dissolving spray,
From the children of a diviner day,
With the lullaby
Of winds that die
On the bosom of their own harmony !

IONE.

What dark forms were they ? 30

PANTHEA.

The past Hours weak and grey,
With the spoil which their toil
Raked together
From the conquest but One could foil.

IONE.

Have they passed ?

PANTHEA.

They have passed ;
They outspeeded the blast,—
While 'tis said, they are fled :

IONE.

Whither, oh, whither ?

PANTHEA.

To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

VOICE of unseen Spirits.

Bright clouds float in heaven,
Dew-stars gleam on earth,
Waves assemble on ocean,
They are gathered and driven
By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee !
They shake with emotion,
They dance in their mirth.
But where are ye ?

40

The pine boughs are singing
Old songs with new gladness,

The billows and fountains 50
Fresh music are flinging,
Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea ;
The storms mock the mountains
With the thunder of gladness.
But where are ye ?

Ione. What charioteers are these ?

Pan. Where are their chariots ?

SEMICHORUS OF HOURS.

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth
Has drawn back the figured curtain of sleep
Which covered our being and darkened our birth
In the deep.

A VOICE.

In the deep ?

SEMICHORUS II.

Oh, below the deep. 60

SEMICHORUS I.

An hundred ages we had been kept
Cradled in visions of hate and care,
And each one who waked as his brother slept,
Found the truth—

SEMICHORUS II.

Worse than his visions were !

SEMICHORUS I.

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep ;
We have known the voice of Love in dreams,
We have felt the wand of Power, and leap—

SEMICHORUS II.

As the billows leap in the morning beams !

CHORUS.

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,
Pierce with song heaven's silent light, 70
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
To check its flight ere the cave of night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,
And it limped and stumbled with many wounds,
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite—

A VOICE.

Unite !

80

Pan. See, where the spirits of the human mind
Wrapped in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

We join the throng
Of the dance and the song,
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along ;
As the flying-fish leap
From the Indian deep,
And mix with the sea-birds, half asleep.

CHORUS OF HOURS.

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,
For sandals of lightning are on your feet, 90
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,
And your eyes are as love which is veiled not ?

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

We come from the mind
Of human kind
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind,
Now 'tis an ocean
Of clear emotion,
A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss
Of wonder and bliss, 100
Whose caverns are crystal palaces ;
From those skiey towers
Where Thought's crowned powers
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours !

From the dim recesses
Of woven caresses,
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses ;
From the azure isles,
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
Delaying your ships with her siren wiles. 110

From the temples high
Of Man's ear and eye,
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy ;
From the murmurings
Of the unsealed springs
Where Science bedews his Dædal wings.

Years after years,
Through blood, and tears,
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears ;
We waded and flew, 120
And the islets were few
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandalled with calm,
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm ;
And, beyond our eyes,
The human love lies
Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS AND HOURS.

Then weave the web of the mystic measure ;
From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth,
Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure, 131
Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
As the waves of a thousand streams rush by
To an ocean of splendour and harmony !

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Our spoil is won,
Our task is done,
We are free to dive, or soar, or run ;
Beyond and around,
Or within the bound
Which clips the world with darkness round. 140

We'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies
Into the hoar deep to colonize :

Death, Chaos, and Night,
 From the sound of our flight,
 Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,
 And the Spirit of Might,
 Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight ;
 And Love, Thought, and Breath, 150
 The powers that quell death,
 Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build
 In the void's loose field
 A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield ;
 We will take our plan
 From the new world of man,
 And our work shall be called the Promethean.

CHORUS OF HOURS.

Break the dance, and scatter the song ;
 Let some depart, and some remain. 160

SEMICHORUS I.

We, beyond heaven, are driven along :

SEMICHORUS II.

Us the enchantments of earth retain :

SEMICHORUS I.

Ceaseless and rapid, and fierce, and free,
With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,
And a heaven where yet heaven could never be.

SEMICHORUS II.

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,
Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,
With the powers of a world of perfect light.

SEMICHORUS I.

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear
From its chaos made calm by love, not fear. 171

SEMICHORUS II.

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,
And the happy forms of its death and birth
Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

CHORUS OF HOURS AND SPIRITS.

Break the dance, and scatter the song,
Let some depart, and some remain,
Wherever we fly we lead along
In leashes, like star-beams, soft yet strong,
The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

Pan. Ha! they are gone!

Ione. Yet feel you no delight 180
From the past sweetness?

Pan. As the bare green hill
When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,
Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water
To the unpavilioned sky!

Ione. Even whilst we speak
New notes arise. What is that awful sound?

Pan. 'Tis the deep music of the rolling world
Kindling within the strings of the waved air,
Æolian modulations.

Ione. Listen too,
How every pause is filled with under-notes,
Clear, silver, icy, keen awakening tones, 190
Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,
As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air
And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

Pan. But see where through two openings in the forest
Which hanging branches overcanopy,
And where two runnels of a rivulet,
Between the close moss violet-inwoven,
Have made their path of melody, like sisters
Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,
Turning their dear disunion to an isle 200

Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts ;
Two visions of strange radiance float upon
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet
Under the ground and through the windless air.

Ione. I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,
In which the mother of the months is borne
By ebbing night into her western cave,
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams,
O'er which is curved an orb-like canopy 210
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods
Distinctly seen through that dusk airy veil,
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass ;
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,
Such as the genii of the thunder-storm
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea
When the sun rushes under it ; they roll
And move and grow as with an inward wind ;
Within it sits a wingèd infant, white
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,
Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost, 221
Its limbs gleam white through the wind-flowing
folds
Of its white robe, woof of ætherial pearl,
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light

Scattered in strings ; yet its two eyes are heavens
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity
Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured
From jagged clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,
Tempering the cold and radiant air around,
With fire that is not brightness ; in its hand 230
It sways a quivering moonbeam, from whose point
A guiding power directs the chariot's prow
Over its wheelèd clouds, which as they roll
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds,
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.

Pan. And from the other opening in the wood
Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,
A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,
Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass
Flow, as through empty space, music and light :
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved, 241
Purple and azure, white,^r green, and golden,
Sphere within sphere ; and every space between
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep,
Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl
Over each other with a thousand motions,
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,
And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,

Intensely, slowly, solemnly roll on, 250
Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,
Intelligible words and music wild.

With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
Of elemental subtlety, like light ;
And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
The music of the living grass and air,
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams,
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed
Seem kneaded into one aërial mass 260

Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,
On its own folded wings and wavy hair
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,
And you can see its little lips are moving,
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

Ione. 'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

Pan. And from a star upon its forehead shoot, 270
Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtined,
Embleming heaven and earth united now,
Vast beams like spokes of some invisible wheel

Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,
Filling the abyss with sunlike lightnings,
And perpendicular now, and now transverse,
Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass,
Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart ;
Infinite mine of adamant and gold, 280
Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,
And caverns on crystalline columns poised
With vegetable silver overspread ;
Wells of unfathomed fire, and water-springs
Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed,
Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-
tops

With kingly, ermine snow. The beams flash on
And make appear the melancholy ruins
Of cancelled cycles ; anchors, beaks of ships ;
Planks turned to marble ; quivers, helms, and spears,
And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels 291
Of scythèd chariots, and the emblazonry
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems
Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin !
The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
Whose population which the earth grew over
Was mortal, but not human ; see, they lie,

Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
Their statues, homes and fanes ; prodigious shapes
Huddled in grey annihilation, split, 301
Jammed in the hard, black deep ; and over these,
The anatomies of unknown wingèd things,
And fishes which were isles of living scale,
And serpents, bony chains, twisted around
The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
Had crushed the iron crags ; and over these
The jagged alligator, and the might
Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once 310
Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
Increased and multiplied like summer worms
On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe
Wrapped deluge round it like a cloke, and they
Yelled, gasped, and were abolished ; or some God
Whose throne was in a comet, passed, and cried,
Be not ! And like my words they were no more.

THE EARTH.

The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness !
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness,
The vaporous exultation not to be confined ! 321

Ha ! ha ! the animation of delight
Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

THE MOON.

Brother mine, calm wanderer,
Happy globe of land and air,
Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,
Which penetrates my frozen frame,
And passes with the warmth of flame,
With love, and odour, and deep melody 330
Through me, through me !

THE EARTH.

Ha ! ha ! the caverns of my hollow mountains,
My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains,
Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.
The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses,
And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,
Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing
after.

They cry aloud as I do :—Sceptred curse,
Who all our green and azure universe
Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction,
sending 340

A solid cloud to rain hot thunder-stones,
And splinter and knead down my children's bones,
All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and
blending,

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,
Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn,
My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and
snow, and fire ;

My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom
Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,
Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless
mire :

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up
By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup 350
Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all ;
And from beneath, around, within, above,
Filling thy void annihilation, love
Bursts in like light on caves cloven by the thunder-
ball.

THE MOON.

The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosened into living fountains,
My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine :

A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth 360
My cold bare bosom : Oh ! it must be thine
On mine, on mine !

Gazing on thee I feel, I know
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,
And living shapes upon my bosom move :
Music is in the sea and air,
Wingèd clouds soar here and there,
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of :
'Tis love, all love !

THE EARTH.

It interpenetrates my granite mass, 370
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass,
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers ;
Upon the winds, among the clouds 'tis spread,
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest
bowers.

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen
Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being :

With earthquake shock and swiftness making
shiver

Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever,
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished
shadows, fleeing, 381

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror
Which could distort to many a shape of error
This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting
love ;

Which over all his kind as the sun's heaven
Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even,
Darting from starry depths radiance and life^r, doth
move ;

Leave Man, even as a leprous child is left,
Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft
Of rocks, through which the might of healing
springs is poured ; 390

Then when it wanders home with rosy smile,
Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile
It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored :

Man, oh, not men ! a chain of linkèd thought,
Of love and might to be divided not,
Compelling the elements with adamant stress ;

As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free
wilderness :

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul, 400
Whose nature is its own divine control,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea ;
Familiar acts are beautiful through love ;
Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts,—none knew how gentle they
could be !

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
Is as a tempest-wingèd ship, whose helm
Love rules, through waves which dare not over-
whelm, 410
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the
cold mass
Of marble and of colour his dreams pass ;
Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their
children wear ;

Language is a perpetual Orphic song,
Which rules with Dædal harmony a throng
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and
shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave ; heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on !
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air ; 421
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets ? Man unveils me ; I have
none.

THE MOON.

The shadow of white death has passed
From my path in heaven at last,
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep ;
And through my newly-woven bowers,
Wander happy paramours,
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep
Thy vales more deep. 430

THE EARTH.

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
A half infrozen^r dew-globe, green, and gold,
And crystalline, till it becomes a wingèd mist,
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,

Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

THE MOON.

Thou art folded, thou art lying
In the light which is undying
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine ;
All suns and constellations shower 440
On thee a light, a life, a power
Which doth array thy sphere ; thou pourest thine
On mine, on mine !

THE EARTH.

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,
Which points into the heavens dreaming delight,
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep ;
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,
Under the shadow of his beauty lying,
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth
doth keep.

THE MOON.

As in the soft and sweet eclipse, 450
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull ;
So when thy shadow falls on me,
Then am I mute and still, by thee

Covered ; of thy love, orb most beautiful,
Full, oh, too full !

Thou art speeding round the sun
Brightest world of many a one ;
Green and azure sphere which shinest
With a light which is divinest 460
Among all the lamps of Heaven
To whom life and light is given ;
I, thy crystal paramour,
Borne beside thee by a power
Like the polar Paradise,
Magnet-like, of lovers' eyes ;
I, a most enamoured maiden
Whose weak brain is overladen
With the pleasure of her love,
Maniac-like around thee move 470
Gazing, an insatiate bride,
On thy form from every side,
Like a Mænad, round the cup
Which Agavè lifted up
In the weird Cadmæan forest.
Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
I must hurry, whirl and follow
Through the heavens wide and hollow,

Sheltered by the warm embrace
Of thy soul from hungry space, 480
Drinking from thy sense and sight
Beauty, majesty, and might,
As a lover or a chameleon
Grows like what it looks upon,
As a violet's gentle eye
Gazes on the azure sky
Until its hue grows like what it beholds,
As a grey and watery mist
Glow like solid amethyst
Athwart the western mountain it enfolds, 490
When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow.

THE EARTH.

And the weak day weeps
That it should be so.
O gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight
Falls on me like thy clear and tender light
Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night,
Through isles for ever calm ;
O gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
The caverns of my pride's deep universe, 500
Charming the tiger joy, whose tramlings fierce
Made wounds which need thy balm.

Pan. I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,
A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,
Out of the stream of sound.

Ione. Ah me! sweet sister,
The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,
And you pretend to rise out of its wave,
Because your words fall like the clear, soft dew
Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and
hair.

Pan. Peace! peace! A mighty power, which is as
darkness, 510

Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky
Is showered like night, and from within the air
Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up
Into the pores of sunlight: the bright visions,
Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,
Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

Ione. There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

Pan. An universal sound like words: Oh, list!

DEMOGORGON.

Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies, 520
Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll
The love which paves thy path along the skies;

THE EARTH.

I hear : I am as a drop of dew that dies.

DEMOGORGON.

Thou Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee ;
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony :

THE MOON.

I hear : I am a leaf shaken by thee !

DEMOGORGON.

Ye kings of suns and stars, Dæmons and Gods,
Ætherial Dominations, who possess 530
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness :

A VOICE *from above*.

Our great Republic hears, we are bless'd, and bless.

DEMOGORGON.

Ye happy dead, whom beams of brightest verse
Are clouds to hide, not colours to portray,
Whether your nature is that universe
Which once ye saw and suffered—

A VOICE *from beneath.*

Or as they
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

DEMOGORGON.

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes 539
From man's high mind even to the central stone
Of sullen lead ; from Heaven's star-fretted domes
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on :

A CONFUSED VOICE.

We hear : thy words waken Oblivion.

DEMOGORGON.

Spirits, whose homes are flesh : ye beasts and birds,
Ye worms, and fish ; ye living leaves and buds ;
Lightning, and wind ; and ye untameable herds,
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes :

A VOICE.

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

DEMOGORGON.

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave ;
A dupe and a deceiver ; a decay ; 550
A traveller from the cradle to the grave
Through the dim night of the immortal day :

ALL.

Speak : thy strong words may never pass away.

DEMOGORGON.

This is the day, which down the void abyss
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's
despotism,

And Conquest is dragged captive through the
deep :

Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour

Of dead^r endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs 560
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance,

Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength ;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,

Mother of many acts and hours, should free

The serpent that would clasp her with his length ;
These are the spells by which to re-assume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite ; 570
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night ;

To defy Power, which seems omnipotent ;
To love, and bear ; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates ;
Neither to change, nor falter,¹ nor repent ;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free ;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.



Notes.

I. 352. In the original edition there are no commas in this line, which leaves open the possibility of taking 'wail' as a verb. The punctuation in the text is that adopted by Mr Buxton Forman, after the MS. It is, I think, almost certainly correct; the reference being to the two rivers of Hell, Phlegethon and Cocytus.

I. 770. I have ventured here to adopt the suggestion of Mr Buxton Forman, and remove the full stop after 'night' which appears in the first edition.

I. 774. 'Killing footstep.' So in the MS.; the first edition as 'silent.'

II. ii. 38. '*Lake-surrounded.*' So in the MS. and in Mrs Shelley's edition; the first edition has '*lake-surrounding.*'

II. ii. 50. In the first edition there is no stop after 'destined'; in the MS., a full stop; in Mrs Shelley's edition, a colon.

II. ii. 60. In the first edition there is no stop after 'hurrying'; Mrs Shelley inserted the colon. In this line I have ventured to insert a comma after 'fleet,' removing it from after 'behind,' in the next line. It seems to be clear that the 'storm of sound' is supposed to drive the spirits on from behind.

II. ii. 100. *Reigns down.* This is the reading of the first edition, and is retained by Mr Buxton Forman, meaning, of course, 'by reigning destroys.' Mrs Shelley's edition has *rains*,

possibly from Shelley's list of errata; and this is retained in Mr G. E. Woodberry's 'Centenary Edition.' Taking the sense of the whole passage into account, I find it hard to choose between these readings, neither of which seems to me to give very good sense.

II. v. 54. *Limbs*. So in Mrs Shelley's edition; in the first edition, *lips*.

II. v. 86. *And*. This 'and' does not appear in the first edition, nor in Mrs Shelley's. Its insertion is an emendation by Mr Rossetti, which I regard, with Mr Buxton Forman, as 'absolutely certain,' for metrical reasons.

III. i. 13. *Night*. So in Mrs Shelley's edition; in the first edition, *might*.

III. i. 20. *Destined*. So in Mrs Shelley's edition; in the first edition, *distant*.

III. ii. 22. *Many-peopled*. So Mr Buxton Forman after the MS. Previous editions have *many peopled*.

III. ii. 39. *On*. So in the first edition; in Mrs Shelley's edition, *i'*.

III. iii. 102. *Unwithering*. So in Mrs Shelley's edition; in the first edition, *unwitting*.

III. iv. 172. With some hesitation, I have placed the colon here at the end of the line, instead of after *conquerors* where it stands in the first edition. This change is supported by Mr Rossetti, but condemned by Mr Swinburne and Mr Buxton Forman.

III. iv. 198. In the first edition this passage is punctuated as follows:—

“ The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man

Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise: but man
Passionless; no, yet free from guilt or pain," &c.

This reading is retained by Mr Buxton Forman; but to me the passage so written is simply unintelligible, and I have adopted, with unimportant modifications, Mr Rossetti's punctuation.

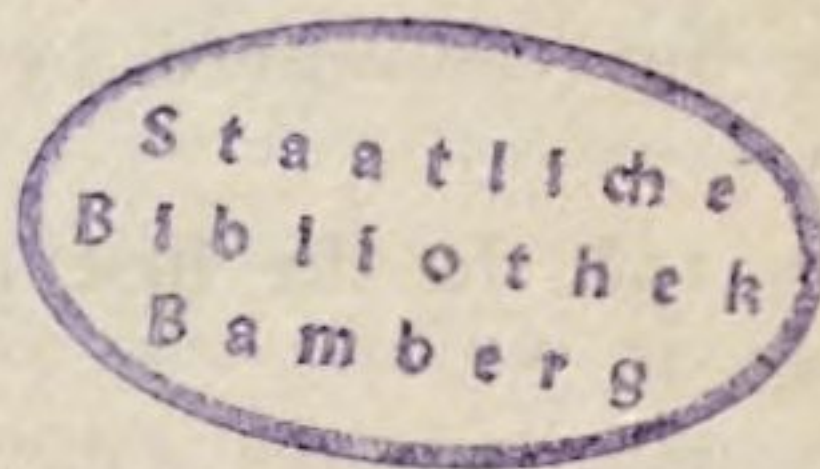
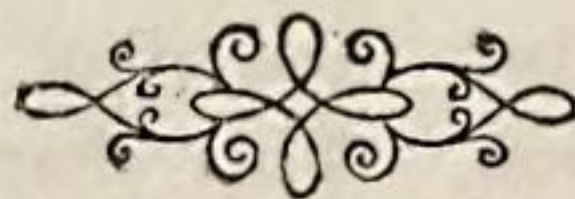
IV. 242. I have printed this line as it stands in the first edition. Mr Rossetti, and, after him, Mr Buxton Forman, insert *and* after *white*.

IV. 387. *Life*. So Mr Buxton Forman after the MS. The earlier editions have *light*.

IV. 432. *Infrozen*. So in the first edition; in Mrs Shelley's edition, *unfrozen*.

IV. 559. *Dead*. So in the first edition; in Mrs Shelley's edition, *dread*.

IV. 575. *Falter*. So in Mrs Shelley's edition; in the first edition, *flatter*.



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